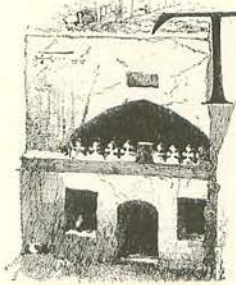


FROM SINAI TO SHECHEM.



THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH.

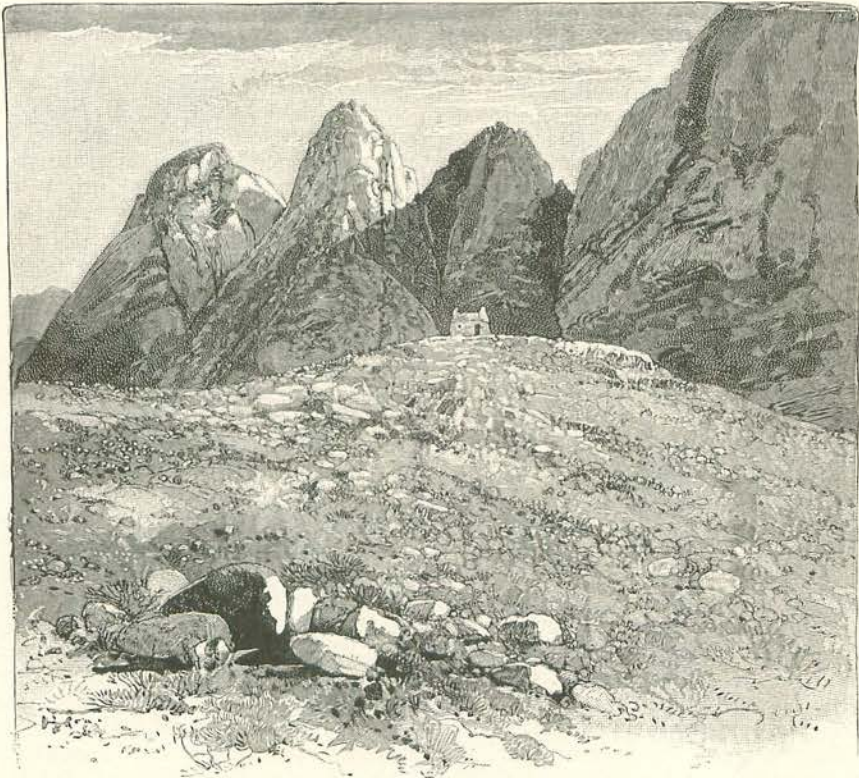
THE traveler who endeavors to work out the topography of the Hebrew migration from Egypt to the Promised Land finds himself engaged in disentangling a very puzzling skein. He may progress so finely as to satisfy himself that Mr. Ebers and others are entirely wrong in giving

Jebel Serbal the honor of being the true Sinai; he may be very sure that Professor Baker Green's argument that the Hebrews crossed the desert in a direct easterly course until they came to the head of the Gulf of Akabah—where he locates Elim—is fallacious; again, he may contentedly accept the route followed in "Sinai

be lost again, and our traveler is quite willing to join the cry which has been sounded all over the world for many centuries, "Where is Kadesh?"

We must accept tradition, and follow what has been, in a measure, satisfactorily disentangled for us. In doing this we leave a large, confused mass of testimony behind. We simply take up a thread, follow it awhile, then break our connection and proceed with another.

The departure from Mount Sinai, whether for Petra or for Palestine, is usually made by way of the Wady es Sheik, the wide mouth of which enters the Sinai valley nearly opposite to "Aaron's Hill," or the "Hill of the Golden Calf." The denuded peaks lift themselves upon each side of this valley, just as they do east and west of the plain of Er Raha. The lack of foliage, however, is more than compen-



JEBEL HAROUN, OR THE "HILL OF THE GOLDEN CALF."

and the Wilderness."¹ Yet after his arrival at the foot of Aaron's Hill the thread is likely to

sated for by the wonderful display of color. It rivals that of the Wady Gharandel, over on the Red Sea side of the peninsula. At one

¹ THE CENTURY MAGAZINE, July, 1888.

place there is a noble, cone-shaped mountain of fawn-colored, red, and brown sandstone, with another adjoining of black and green diorite; while rolling down between them like a cataract is a wide incline of bluish-gray sand. Here and there are sharp crags and jagged peaks, with their depressions filled nearly to their edges with sand, as in Nubia, only here the sand is not of such golden tint as there. Frequently the lower rock-surfaces are covered with Sinaitic inscriptions. Many of these "writings" look like the tracery of some antique humorist, for the figures are mainly of grotesquely formed animals. At frequent intervals the floor of Wady es Sheik is as brilliantly colored as the mountains are; and though zig-zagging, like the sky-lines of its peaks, it is as level as a diligence road over the Alps.

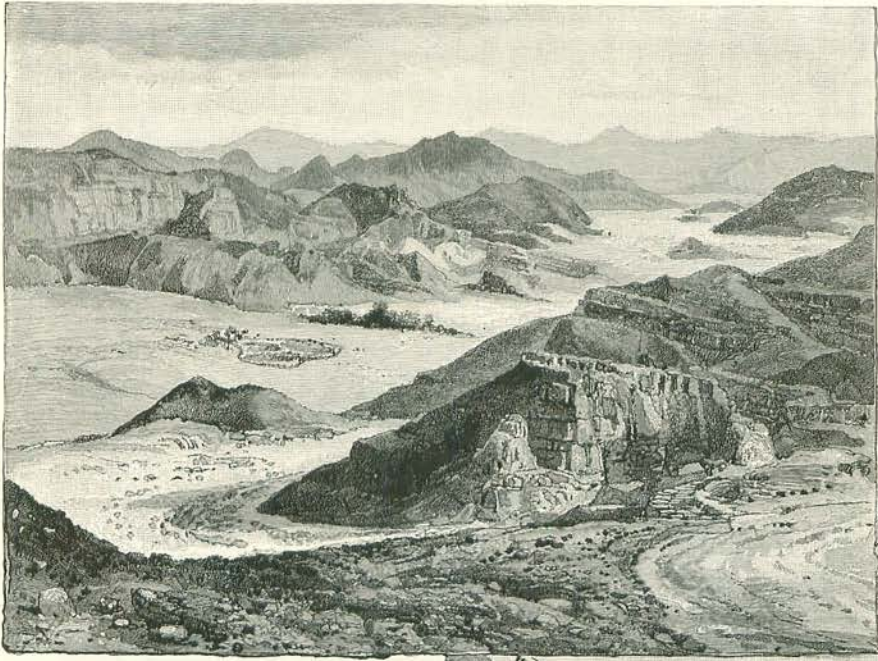
It must have been a glorious sight when Israel was mustered here and marched along in full array towards the Promised Land—the sons of Aaron at the head, bearing the two silver trumpets that had been made for the impending journey.

This assembling seems very recent to the traveler when on camel-back he starts before sunrise and moves slowly up the Wady es Sheik. It seems even more recent when, turning back, he sees the banks of floundering clouds, impelled by the winding air currents, come up from the Sinai group. Every foot of the way becomes a sublime study, and every rift in the mist seems to disclose pages of history. The second day after leaving camp at Mount Sinai the clues become entangled again, and once more we are forced to break the connection. After the murmuring ones had died and were buried at Kibroth-hattaavah, the Israelites "encamped at Hazeroth." The location of Hazeroth is pretty well verified at a place on the direct route to Akabah. After two days of travel from Mount Sinai the traveler comes to a wide-reaching line of hills which seems to stretch along in the shadows of the evening like a city wall. These hills form one side of a plain where Hazeroth is believed to have been located. Here we encamped. Long before reaching it we had been watched by a garrison of greedy vultures stationed on the top of the rocky outpost. Their presence could not have been discovered before morning had not some of the number, more uneasy than their comrades, risen into the last departing rays of the sunset, swooped around for a moment, and then clumsily dropped like lead into the shadows again. The evening meal was made ready and eaten here, and the old, familiar songs were sung to drive away home-longings. At early candlelight the weary desert-travelers crept into their tents and lay down to rest and sleep. Such is the experience

of all who spend the night under the long wall which protects one side of the gorge of 'Ain Hudhera. When the morning comes the top of the wall must be gained, and the traveler changes places with the vultures; for as soon as he vacates his camp, they swirl down to it with the hope of finding some morsels of food.

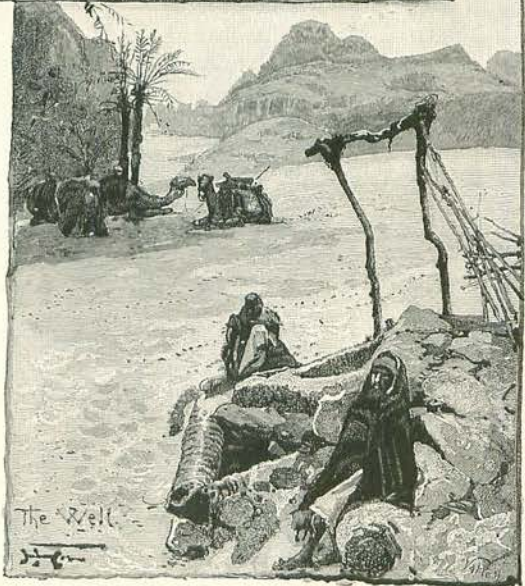
It is difficult to find a greater surprise than that which delights the eye when, after an hour of hard climbing, the top of one of the neighboring hills is reached. To the right is a broad, natural stairway which winds down for the distance of two hundred feet. Its sides are lined with fluted and spiral columns, the depressions of which are colored red, yellow, lilac, and blue, and now and then are wavy like the stones of Petra. Beyond, and intervening, are numberless peaks,—red, white, brown, greenish-gray tipped with red, yellow, reddish-brown covered a part of the way up with white sand, pink, and umber,—all in strange contrast with the greater shapes of solid brown and gray. One of the most beautifully formed peaks is of light green, tipped with bright brick-red. The floor of this many-hued passageway is white sand and sandstone, waved here and there with lilac, yellow, and red. Near the center are two bright oases, with groves of palms, rice fields, and patches of lentils. Several walled wells are there, fed by the springs and subterranean aqueducts which convey water from the mountains on the west. In some places the aqueducts are uncovered. They are partly cut from the native rock and partly lined with slabs of quarried stone. It must have cost much labor and enterprise to construct them, and do they not tell that many people dwelt there once upon a time? A rare scene was presented when our caravan halted in the gorge of 'Ain Hudhera and the travelers were made welcome to water by the old sheik who resides there. He declared that he was over one hundred years old, and showed his hospitality by brushing the sand from the palm-logs around the well "to make a place for the stranger." This is believed to be the site of the Hazeroth of the Israelites.

Passing through this gorge, one gains the impression that it must have been the bed of a lake. Surely the water must have built up the strata of color which, lying one upon the other, form some of the domes and mountains. This surmise is confirmed when the northern extremity is approached, for there some very curious formations are found. Among others there is a sandstone column about twelve feet high, shaped at the top like an Egyptian capital. Overhanging it and reaching down two or three feet is a coral-like formation which gives it a very fantastic appearance. The column is striped vertically in red, brown, yellow, and



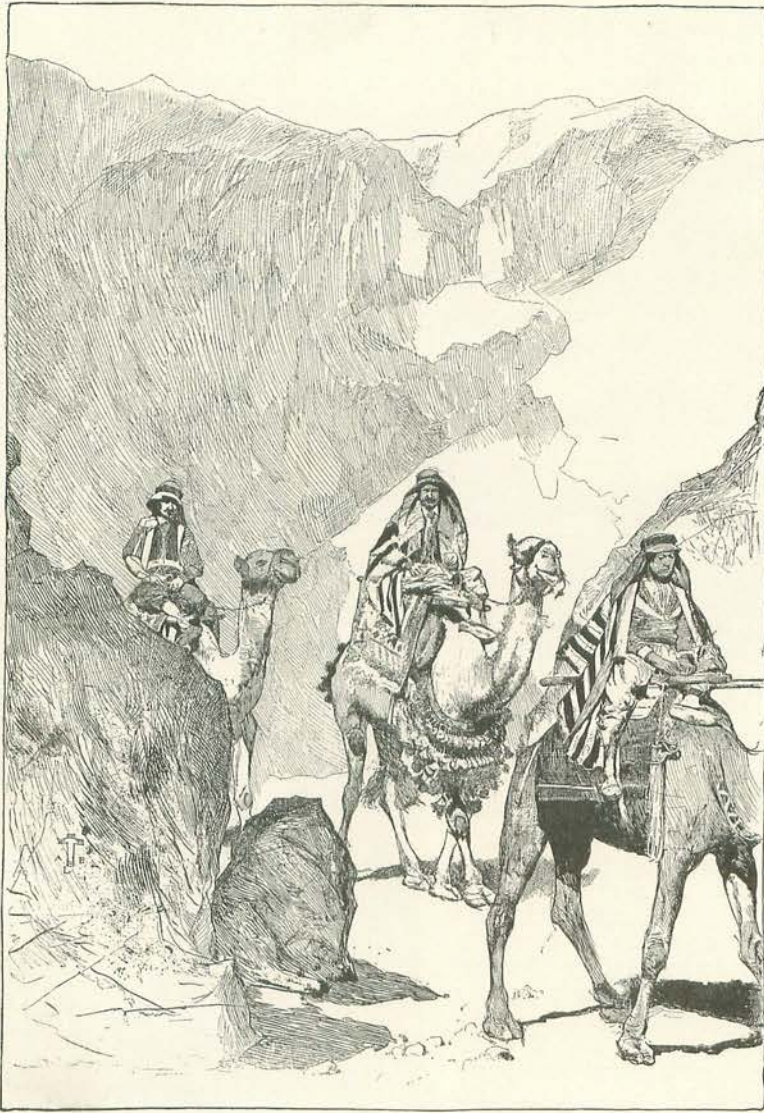
THE GORGE OF 'AIN HUDHERA — HAZEROTH.

fawn colors, while the capital is of delicate gray, varied by lilac and white. It stands there alone, the speechless evidence of some mysterious effort of Nature, hard to understand. Lateral waves of color also run through it and add to its singular beauty. Its background is a water-sculptured wall, colored by the mineral wealth of generous Nature. It seems like a petrified pillar of cloud and of fire. The gorge spoils one for the enjoyment of the broad piazza—the Wady el 'Ain—into which it leads. Its sculptured glories and its lovely fountains are truly wonderful. A half-day's journey—say a dozen miles—from Hazeroth, over an unusually level way, on the left, is an ascending wady between two lines of mountains. It is carpeted by sandstone the color of clover blossoms. Green bushes dotted here and there present a lovely picture. Nature was in a freakish convulsion when she set this part of her stage. On the other side of the wady, the rosy carpet of which lies outspread as soft as an Axminster, are two lofty mountains of pink granite. Their bases come so closely together that the space between them scarcely admits the passage of two loaded camels abreast. A great rock divides the way. It has stood there as sentinel for ages. This is "the entrance-gate" to Wady el 'Ain ("the wady with the fountain or spring"). Beyond



The Well.

the gate a magnificent wall of granite rises almost perpendicularly and seems to form the end of the wady; but it does not. There is a clear passage to the right which leads to a bright oasis located on the direct route to the Gulf of Akabah. Did Moses lead his hosts one by one through this narrow pass? Did these rough walls reëcho the murmurings of Hebrew discontent? Tradition holds that they did. The Book says, "And they departed from Hazeroth, and . . . encamped at Ezion-gaber." Ezion-gaber is supposed to have been



"THE ENTRANCE-GATE" TO WADY EL 'AIN.

located at the head of the Gulf of Akabah. Between the two places there are seventeen stations, named in Numbers xxxiii., where "they encamped." It would be the natural thing to follow up the thread, but the order of our purpose compels us to stop here and pick up another clue. At some future time we may be able to resume the "long desert" route, follow it on through the Mount Seir region, and connect with the leader which comes out at the entrance to Petra.¹

"The people removed from Hazeroth and pitched in the wilderness of Paran," which is "the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh." And where is Kadesh? Learned travelers and

¹ THE CENTURY MAGAZINE, November, 1885.

students have located it at nearly twenty places. Dean Stanley and his followers believed that Petra is Kadesh; Dr. Edward Robinson much earlier expressed his conviction that it is at 'Ain el Weibeh, in a region about two days' camel journey west of Petra, on the edge of the vast wady which stretches from the Gulf of Akabah to the Dead Sea. Many years ago claims were made by Dr. Rowlands for 'Ain Qadees, an oasis still farther west than 'Ain el Weibeh, and south of it. This last site has been proved by Dr. H. Clay Trumbull to hold the best evidences of being the much sought-for locality. The story of his visit thither, and the full measure of his proofs, Dr. Trumbull sets forth earnestly and eloquently in his

monograph, published in 1884, entitled "Kadesh-Barnea." Only those who have wandered in the desert as he did, with the strain of a single idea controlling every nerve, can fully understand the joy which he felt when coming upon a site so long sought for. I am permitted to quote his own words:

Out from the barren and desolate stretch of the burning desert waste we had come with a magical suddenness into an oasis of verdure and beauty, unlooked for and hardly conceivable in such a region. A carpet of grass covered the ground. Fig trees, laden with fruit nearly ripe enough for eating, were along the shelter of the southern hillside. Shrubs and flowers showed themselves in variety and profusion. Running water gurgled under the waving grass. We had seen nothing like it since leaving Wady Fayran; nor was it equaled in loveliness of scene by any single bit of landscape, of like extent, even there.

Standing out from the earth-covered limestone hills at the north-eastern sweep of this picturesque recess was to be seen the "large single mass, or a small hill of solid rock," which Rowlands looked at as the cliff [*Sel a'*] smitten by Moses, to cause it to "give forth his water," when its flowing stream had been exhausted. From underneath this ragged spur of the north-easterly mountain range issued the now abundant stream.

A circular well, stoned up from the bottom with timeworn limestone blocks, was the first receptacle of the water. A marble watering-trough was near this well, better finished than the troughs at Beer-sheba, but of like primitive workmanship. The mouth of this well was only about three feet across, and the water came to within three or four feet of the top. A little distance westerly from this well, and down the slope, was a second well, stoned up much like the first, but of greater diameter; and here again was a marble watering-trough. A basin or pool of water larger than either of the wells, but not stoned up like them, was seemingly the principal watering-place. It was a short distance south-westerly from the second well, and it looked as if it and the two wells might be supplied from the same subterranean source—the springs under the rock. Around the margin of this pool, as also around the stoned wells, camel and goat dung—as if of flocks and herds for centuries—was trodden down and commingled with the limestone dust so as to form a solid plaster-bed. Another and yet larger pool, lower down the slope, was supplied with water by a stream which rippled and cascaded along its narrow bed from the upper pool; and yet beyond this, westward, the water gurgled away under the grass, as we had met it when we came in, and finally lost itself in the parching wady from which this oasis opened. The water itself was remarkably pure and sweet, unequaled by any we had found after leaving the Nile.

There was a New England look to this oasis, especially in the flowers and grass and weeds, quite unlike anything we had seen in the peninsula of Sinai.

A year after Dr. Trumbull's visit, while journeying from Petra to Palestine with the same

dragoman who accompanied him, I crossed the Wady Arabah with the hope of finding 'Ain Qadees and bringing away some photographs of it. Nearly the whole of the route taken had "never been traveled over by white man," and was through a country where the Bedouin tribes were "at war with each other." One afternoon while I was in Petra a noble-looking Bedouin came riding in alone on horseback. He seemed very much at home, and very superior to the demons whose torments I endured there for four days. He proved to be Sheik Ouida, from Gaza, and was the tax-gatherer for the Government. His errand to Petra was to collect the annual tax due upon the sheep, goats, and camels—including the stolen ones—then in the possession of the Petra Bedouins. He declared that he had "seen 'Ain Qadees, from the top of a hill, more than once when on the journey homeward from Petra," and volunteered to act as our escort thither. His services were thereupon engaged for four days, at two pounds sterling per day. In due course we set out upon the search. Our contract with the Akabah sheik was to go by Nakl and Gaza, but we persuaded his men to follow our wishes at our risk. It was a dreary camel ride across the Arabah. There was little to divert us except the Gaza escort, who "played" with his horse frequently for our entertainment. The short, sagacious animal could gallop uphill as easily as he could go down, and was well drilled in the exercises of the tournament. He had a decided advantage over the camel. Sometimes he and his rider would fly over the hill ahead, and get beyond our sight. When we reached the summit of the rise they had crossed, we would see them standing upon the top of another one far away. We could tell our own guide by the manner in which he held his long spear, a signal agreed upon between us. After our conflict with the fellahin at Petra we were somewhat apprehensive of an attack. Moreover, we were in an unknown country, where the Bedouins were said to be at war. Watchfulness, then, was incumbent. Once Sheik Ouida came galloping back to us with the report that a company of Bedouins who were not "sahib" ("friendly") were coming. They came, but they exchanged salutations with us without offering to molest us or our Akabah attendants. Indeed, both parties seemed glad to get away. When in doubt as to his direction, our guide planted his spear among the rocks on the hill-top, made his horse fast to it, and descended into the valley on foot, "to save the horse, who might become too thirsty." At other times, when he found the way too rough for his red-topped boots, he planted his spear where we could see it, and rode until he

reached a neighboring hill to reconnoiter. In this way we were guided along the proper road, and made to feel comfortable at all times, from the fact that our cautious leader never permitted himself to be long out of our sight; or, if he did, he left some signal in view to prove that he was never unmindful of our welfare. Thus we were confident of being as

There also is a fountain or well, very small and very shallow, sunk in the mother rock. This is 'Ain el Weibeh, the place considered by Dr. Edward Robinson to be Kadesh-Barnea, where Moses was commanded to speak to a rock for water (Numbers xx.); where Miriam died; where Moses and Aaron, within sight of the mountains, which some of the Hebrews



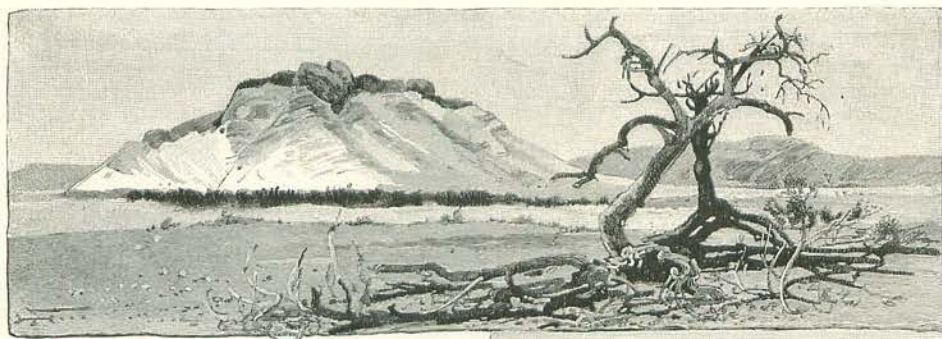
'AIN EL WEIBEH.

safe as possible, and were content to go on, even through a country known to be infested by tribes of Bedouins unfriendly to those from the Akabah country, as were our attendants.

On the morning of the third day the scenery began to grow more beautiful. The sun had crossed the hills of Edom and was doing his best to bring out the gaudy colors of Zin. To the north the mountains of Moab rose splendidly, and it was so clear, that, had we been at a sufficient elevation, we could have seen the Dead Sea. Standing like a sentinel between the two ranges, topped by the tomb of Aaron, was "Jebel Haroun," the Mount Hor of the Mohammedans. We had encamped near the western border of the Arabah. At 9 o'clock A. M. we came to a bright oasis, where our guide stood crying out, "Moya henna" ("Water here"). It is a long, narrow, green spot, with an abundance of scrub-palms, reeds, rushes, grasses, and shrubs growing about it, wild and thick.

tried to pass over in order to reach the longed-for country, were told that they should not see the Promised Land.

But a short distance away from the well is a mound covered with juniper bushes. This is revered by the Bedouins as "the grave of Miriam." The adjacent soil is crusty, like newly frozen snow, and breaks easily under the foot. Although the water here is unusually sportive on account of the animal life in it,— "living water" in a truly realistic sense,—and so bitter to the taste that no one could censure Israel for murmuring, we were obliged to fill our water-skins with a two-days' supply, for we knew not when we should find any better. What we left was entirely taken up by the camels, and 'Ain el Weibeh became an exhausted spring. More than once it happened to us that the tiny spring happily found on the way did not afford enough for man and beast. When there was abundance, it was usual for



THE "HOLY TREE" NEAR THE BORDERS OF CANAAN.

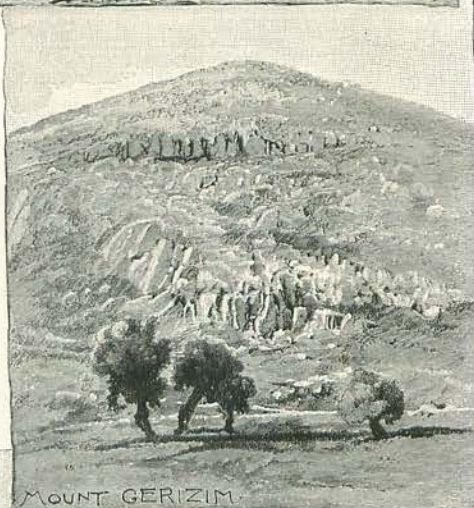
all to kneel down at the little stream and drink side by side. Oasis hunting sometimes becomes an earnest business with the desert traveler, and he fully understands the value of the precious element. Frequently the route is left for half a day to reach water.¹ Where the wells of our long-sighted ancestors still exist, the traveler is allowed to drink what he needs during his sojourn, but not to carry any away, except by purchase. To "pay for water" at first seems an injustice; and yet, when fairly considered, it will appear right, for the supply is not always ample. It is sometimes quite a risk to allow any one to draw two or three barrels of water from a well, especially when it may be six or eight months before the heavens will visit the land with anything like a cloud-break. In a desert journey of forty-five days during March and April, I saw but two "showers," and the longer was only forty-five seconds in duration.

Again, when Moses was directed for his long journey in the Mount Seir region, among other things the Divine *dictum* enjoined (Deuteronomy ii. 6), "Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink." So it will seem that this old-time custom is still followed, and the desert traveler must submit without murmuring.

There was no evidence that the dreary region round about 'Ain el Weibeh had been inhabited, and it would require a great deal of faith to believe that it ever was. Even the stones about the well had all been arranged by Nature, and not by man. It was the only place thereabout that could be thought of as Kadesh-Barnea, because there was no other water visible in any direction. Such a spot could not satisfy any one who had any faith in Almighty mercy.

The heat was intense, and our departure

¹ Sometimes I have been shown these places only on condition that I would "not tell anybody."



MOUNT GERIZIM



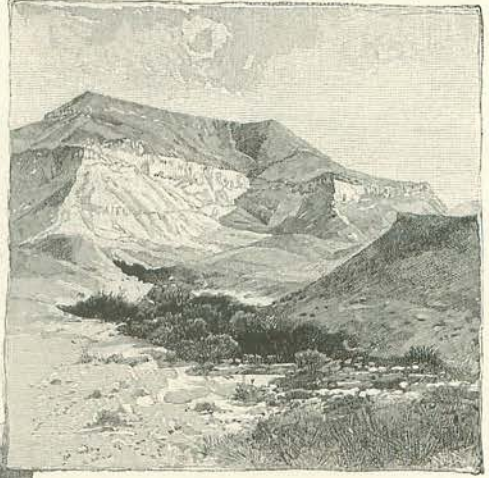
MOUNT EBAL

H.C. COLLIER'S ST.

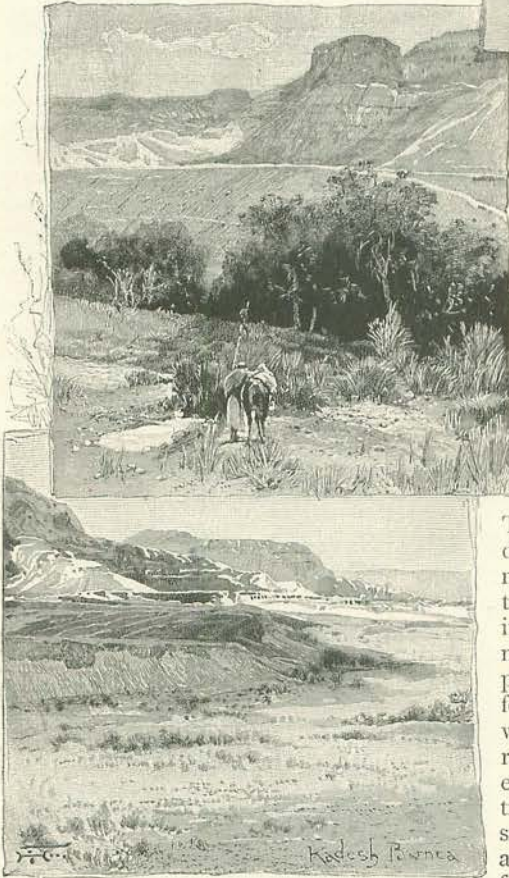
was hastened. Soon after 'Ain el Weibeh is left behind, the country westward begins to rise and the forms and outlines of the mountains become beautiful. At one spot a dead but "holy tree" was found, the denuded limbs of which added to the picturesqueness of one of our halting-places. Ouida declared that "It was there when Moses came along." Our camel-men

protested when we prepared to carry away some of the fragments which were scattered over the ground. "It is all holy," they said, "and can be removed by Allah only." A pass in the hills beyond, called "Nagb Weibeh," was pointed out as "the place where the spies of Moses passed through."

Lunch that day was eaten under a huge pomegranate tree; this was full of blossoms, though almost leafless. At night we encamped in a great amphitheater, as nearly circular in form as if it had been quarried so. I repeatedly inquired of Ouida how near we were to 'Ain Qadees, but he could not tell. "It is coming, sir," was his usual answer. Evidently we were lost in the wilderness, and under that



VIEWS OF THE OASES NEAR KADESH-BARNEA.



to a long range of limestone and flint-covered hills. Among these we wandered an hour or two, when suddenly Ouida, whom we had not missed, came galloping towards us crying, "Henna, henna!" ("Here, here!") Following him through a narrow passage made by two bright-colored hills, we saw outspread before us a long, narrow oasis. A quick, short walk of our camels brought us under the shade of its fig trees, and we dismounted. Had the four days of weary searching been rewarded by a rest at 'Ain Qadees? We were assured by Hedayah that it was so. "Yesterday," said he, "you saw Dr. Robinson's Kadesh; but now you are in Sheik Trumbull's Kadesh, where he and I ate dinner together a year ago." Our lunch was made ready, but my anxiety impelled me to slight it and to proceed with the examination of the place. With the notes given me by Dr. Trumbull in hand, I walked from point to point and checked off the proofs I found: the walled wells; the fig trees laden with fruit; the groves of palms; the rushes, reeds, grasses, grain; the running stream—everything as described, except the water-troughs and the "large single mass, or a small hill of solid rock." The water-troughs are sometimes removed by the Bedouins. I found an isolated mountain several hundred feet high, and in its side a gorge with a great rock at its farther end. At the base of this, out of a cavern cut by nature, came a wide stream-bed which followed down to the trees, passed the wells, and then the water became lost among the grasses and the grain. From the top of this solid rock, not hard to reach, a wonderful view was presented. There was a vast plain with an abundant and varied pasture such as we had not seen in Arabia. Ruined buildings dotted the

impression we lay down to rest. The next morning the route led us up a flinty incline until we seemed to be miles in the air. Then a long and deep ravine was followed, where we found a few bushes, some grass, and some better water. We lost no time in exchanging the lively product of 'Ain el Weibeh for a purer article. Coming then to another rugged ridge, and not knowing what better to do, we ascended it; then, descending on the other side, we came

hilltops here and there, and low stone walls ran along the hills, one above the other, evidently placed to keep the soil of the terraces from being precipitated to the wadies by the torrents. The neighborhood became more and more interesting as I examined it, and my heart thrilled with delight when my earnest dragoman again assured me that "This is, so far as I can remember, Dr. Trumbull's Kadesh." Thereupon the camera was applied to for a view of the well, with Ouida and his horse; another of a picturesque sandstone hill which lined one side of the oasis; and then, from its summit, views of the plain were made right and left. Sheik Ouida then made his departure, and the last we saw of him was as he rode his little horse around the beautiful hill on his journey to Gaza. He took our gratitude with him, but he was not entitled to it. He conducted us to an oasis several miles north of 'Ain Qadees, where probably "no white man ever trod"; but it was not 'Ain Qadees. To mollify his chagrin when I assured him of my doubts, the amiable Hedayah named the place of our visit "Sheik Wilson's Kadesh," and so we left it. Further search would have been made if I had not felt fairly convinced at the time that we had found what we were seeking. We had at least found what must be a close neighbor of 'Ain Qadees. With the belief that we had been even more successful, however, our caravan, which had been lost in the desert for four days, ascended the hills on the north and made a straight cut for Hebron, by way of Beersheba. The night was spent near some ruins of buildings on the edge of the plain already described. The next day the flinty inclines of the Negeb country gave us variety. It was one of the most difficult climbs we made. The pass that we ascended led to another extensive plain, where again ruins were seen and where the same system of low walls prevailed. There were miles of these walls, even then in as shapely condition as those on the highway between New York and Boston. The tiers ran parallel with each other and encircled the hills far up towards their tops. Following this plain is another and lower range of mountains. After reaching the top of the rocky pass which was selected as the most comfortable for the ascent, a remarkable transition scene was presented. Instead of steep inclines, bleak and bare of everything but a confusion of limestone and flint, the other side was green with grass, dotted with millions of wild-flowers of almost every known color. The sight was absolutely overpowering. Surely none more gratifying could meet the gaze of the weary mountain climber who had not had an hour free from anxiety or a sight of a flower for two weeks.

At noon that day we lunched seated upon

the bank of an active stream. Just below us the water made a downward leap of a dozen feet. The food was spread upon a rug, nature-woven, of white daisies, red poppies, and blue, yellow, white, and lilac flowers, all as delicate and tiny and wild as our own sweet heralds of spring. We sat on the border of the Promised Land, and could easily see its charming undulations many miles ahead. Towards night a thunder-shower seemed to be coming up from the south. A wide, deep wady was crossed that looked as if it had never made way for a gallon of water since its creation. The tents were pitched for the night upon a high mound covered with grass and flowers. During the night the expected rain fell, and that dry wady became a deep and wide and roaring river for many miles of its length, thus making us witness to another one of those quick transitions which come with the spring-time in that wonderful region. We followed the newly born stream for some time next day, and forded a number of its busy tributaries while they brought in their muddy, foaming toll from the mountain sides. Parts of the plain were submerged by the overflow, and the poor little flowers had a discouraging time of it. Their fate was a grim augury of our own; for, a few hours after, we found ourselves encroaching upon the land of the Azazimehs, the descendants of Ishmael, and were overwhelmed by a storm of abuse from a delegation of the tribe, who, having sighted us afar off, stood awaiting us at the ford of the river which led up Beersheba way. Practically we were made prisoners, and remained so a good part of two days. A poorer and more degraded tribe does not exist than the Azazimeh Bedouins—even the fellahin of Petra are better off; but they make up for it in impudence and bluster. Every one who drives a camel into their territory is attacked and abused and treated as a spy. The sheik of the tribe had recently been killed in a tribal war, and his place had been taken by a young aspirant who was as large as a veritable son of Anak and who was as insolent as he was large. He declared that our attendants, who were Haiwatt Bedouins from Akabah, were at war with the Azazimehs and could not be allowed to cross the territory. "Will you, then, supply us camels to take us across to Hebron?" "No; we have no camels of our own. They have all been stolen from us." "What, then, must we do?" "You may proceed to Hebron if you like."

This practically prevented us from going on. Not until the night of the second day could this dispute be settled. At last it was agreed that for backsheesh a messenger should go to the camp of the Teyáhahs in the adjoining territory and engage camels for the removal

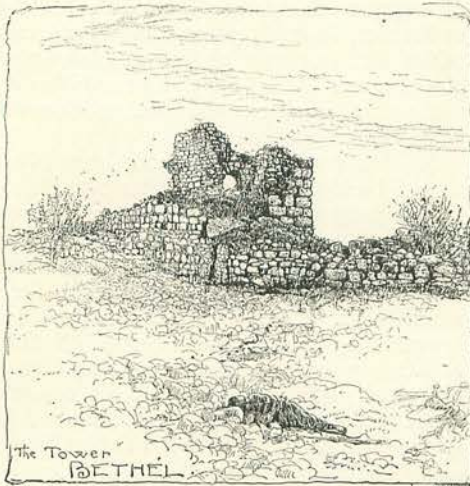


BEDOUIN OUTCASTS.

of our luggage. No day in Petra held more anxiety than this one did; for parting with the mutinous wretches into whose hands we had voluntarily placed ourselves at Akabah, compromising with those who held us prisoners, and arranging with the newcomers, required an amount of intolerable yelling and bluster which was more interesting than pleasant. Swords, pistols, clubs, spears, fists, and guns were all used; but nobody was hurt—very much. Even the moon looked troubled by the time we made our departure. If such people infested this region when the spies came this way, it is not so wonderful that they returned to Moses and said, "We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." Certainly my long-felt sympathy for Hagar and Ishmael was much shaken by my dealings with their descendants. Nothing could be more lovely, however, than the region reached a day's journey farther north, when in the neighborhood of "the brook Eshcol." The land rolls through "green pastures" and "beside the still waters." The wide valleys were clothed with verdure, spotted with daisies, buttercups, dandelions, poppies white and red, and many other flowers. Large flocks were there, attended by their shepherds; the fellahin were at work, and the women, tall and erect, were everywhere carrying water in jars upon their heads. The fields were protected from the torrents by stone walls such as we saw in the wilderness, and olive groves and vineyards abounded. It was a grateful scene, made more so by the resemblance of the gray-sided hills to those of good old Massachusetts. Each vineyard of Eshcol was protected by a high stone wall; in every one was a low stone structure which served as the house of the attendant. The roof was the watch-tower, whereupon the watcher spent the day, to keep the birds and the Bedouins away from the fruit. Nestled away down in the valley below lies Hebron, "in the plains of Mamre." There, reaching across, is the old camping-ground of the patriarchs, and in the distance, towering above everything else except the surrounding hills, are the minarets of the mosque which covers the cave of Machpelah. Hebron is the oldest town in the world which has maintained a continuous existence. To one coming up from a two-months' wandering in the wilds of the scorched desert, where only an occasional oasis occurs to sustain faith in that stage of creation when God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind," this first sight of holy land is an enchanting one; yet one, as was afterwards found, where distance lends enchantment to the view. The hills and the valleys alike are clothed with

olive groves, orange trees, and vineyards; figs, mulberries, almonds, pomegranates, and vegetables like our own melons and cucumbers also abound. Streams of water run hither and thither and murmur music which gladdens the heart of the weary traveler.

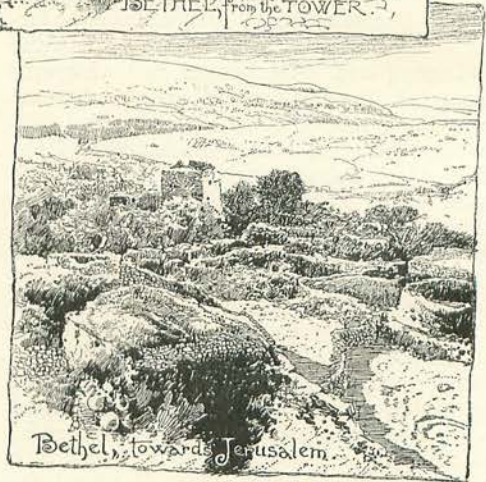
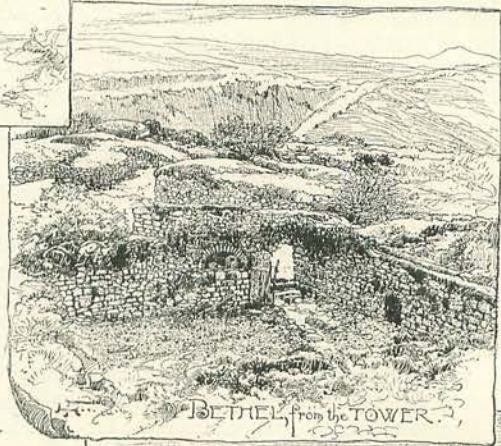
It is no wonder that Caleb's heart always turned back to this region after his visit to it as a spy, regardless of the threatening appearance of the children of Anak. Surely Joshua was just when he "blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance." Caleb was not afraid, and he revered the place for good reasons. The frugal and industrious husbandman still cares for this historical plain. Seated upon the mountain south of the vale of Eshcol, one can see just where Joshua and "all Israel with him" fought against Hebron; where the fugitives used to run into this city of refuge and fall, panting with fear, at the corner of the great pool, saved as soon as they touched its wall; doubtless the very route over which the spies came, and undoubtedly the narrow valley through which Abraham hurried his three hundred and eighteen trained servants up towards Dan to rescue his kinsman Lot, who had been captured by the four kings. There, too, on the far left, is Abraham's oak, said to mark the spot where the patriarch's tent was located when the angels visited him; on the right, glistening like a gigantic mirror in the sun, is the great pool, upon the farther wall of which David hanged the heads of the kings who had murdered Ish-bosheth, the son of his rival Saul. A wonderful amount of history clusters about this valley and the well-cultivated inclines which shape it. Adjoining the tents of my party were those of two young sons of the Prince of Wales and their companions. We were told that the streets of Hebron had been cleaned for the princes, yet the passages seemed very filthy after coming from the clean, dry wadies of the Negeb and the stony highways of the wilderness of Kadesh. The bazars of Hebron are dark and damp. Only a small opening in the wall here and there allows the light to come in, and for such a blessing extra rent is charged. The streets are crowded, and the crowds are motley enough. The tawny gypsy, the brown Bedouin of the desert, the spiritless Syrian, and the pale, blue-eyed Jew, with his greasy red love-locks, provide a gradation of color as well as a variety of types. All of the women do not cover their faces; but if they were faithful to the cause of beauty and of Mohammed they would. The children are chubby and pretty, but insolent, pert, and dirty. They spit upon the stranger and throw stones at him. The manufacture of glass beads is carried on extensively at Hebron, and the preparation of



goat-skins for carrying water is also a principal industry. Of course the great attraction of the town is the old mosque. It is entered by quite a pretentious stairway, with a fountain on the right-hand side of an arched doorway of red and black and yellow stones. It looks older than the Nile temples. Its walls are of long, beveled stones, with nearly three inches of cement or mortar between them. As a rule Christians are not admitted inside, but Jews are permitted to go as far as the inner wall of the cave inclosure, where, near a small hole, they wail and weep as they do at the Haram wall in Jerusalem. From the top of the outer wall, however, reached from the roof of an old mosque, the traveler may look down into the court and see and photograph the door or entrance to the Cave of Machpelah. It is in no way pretentious—only a pointed arch crossed by a wall reaching up about eight feet, and broken by a low, arched entrance in the center, with a square aperture at each side to admit light. Yet this is the most interesting sepulcher on the face of the earth; for inside are the graves of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah. No site in Palestine is more authentic, and none so carefully guarded.

Having now considered the region visited by the spies, we follow them back to Kadesh. Thus, in obedience to the chronology of our present undertaking, we come upon the scene of the departure of the Israelites from the wilderness of Kadesh for the land of Canaan. Their nomadic life was about to be changed for the more comfortable one of the Promised Land. But how were they to get there? They could follow up the Wady Arabah until they arrived near to the Dead Sea, and then continue among the cliffs of Moab on the east,

or they could wind through the equally difficult ravines on the west; but both routes were very difficult and dangerous, because of the opposition they might meet from the dwellers in the land. They were refused a passage through the land of Edom, and there was but one route left for them to follow: that was to retrace their steps southward to Akabah, then go by the wilderness of Moab. The route is clearly defined in Deuteronomy ii. 8 as follows: "And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from



Elath [Akabah], and from Ezion-gaber [at the north end of the Gulf of Akabah], we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab."

A wide plain will meet the view of the modern traveler as he comes up from the south to the wilderness of Moab. This plain rises gradually until it approaches the Jordan, where the western border reaches nearly four thousand feet above the sea. Standing at that height, one obtains an impressive idea of the vast depression of the Jordan valley and of the Dead

Sea. The noble mountains which run north and south form a wall, as it were, between the Jordan valley and the farther east. The bare and rocky mountains of Gilead seem the nearer: so near are they that one with good eyes may see how the descending torrents have torn deep into their sides, and in places he may discern the differences between the species of trees in the forests which clothe the plains lying at the mountain bases. Now the broad expanses seem to sink far, far out of focus; and then they yield again to the rocks and barren fields, with only an occasional thicket occurring to relieve the dull monotony. Rising high on the right of the prospect is a range of mountains leading southward, from which somewhere rise the tops of Mount Pisgah and the mountains of Nebo. Beyond these, and back to the south again, are the bleak and sunburned summits of the Arabian Mountains, so far away, and yet seemingly so very near. The desert plains, the uneasy sands, the drought-seamed soil, and the torrent-worn wadies, thousands in number, combine to suggest a scene where active force has been suspended and the whole petrified by the sudden grip of a dreadful power all unseen—as though some purgatorial air had blown across it and scorched out its life while the dramatic changes were going on. The wild roar of the ocean, with its display of power, does not move the soul more than does the awful silence of a Moabitish landscape. Both alike seem to be places where God makes his abode, where Nature's mighty wonders are most impressively revealed.

Many an earnest and industrious explorer has traversed this land of Moab with the hope of locating "the mountain of Nebo" and the "top of Pisgah." The Bible record seems to place them very exactly: "The Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar." That included Mount Hermon on the north; from Sidon to Gaza on the west, and from below Hebron on the south. The effort of the explorer has been to find a mountain range with a summit—not necessarily the highest one of all—from which all the country included in the Bible record may be made out. Agreeing that there is no presumption in the desire to see with the modern eye as much as was divinely revealed to Moses, the accounts of those who have made the trial are exceedingly interesting. American explorers have been the most industrious in this search, and there seems to be no doubt that Professor John A. Paine is entitled to the highest credit for the information he has given us concerning

the identification of Mount Pisgah. From his valuable record, which fills one hundred and fifty pages of the "Journal of the Palestine Exploration Society" (January, 1875), we learn that the noted traveler gathered his proofs by personal investigation. Several summits were ascended, and in turn were found wanting. Patiently and persistently the work went on. All the clues obtained from the traditions of the wandering Bedouins and from the beckonings of Nature were followed, and sometimes they led to nothing more reliable than a mirage. At last a mountain headland with a divided summit was found, called Jebel Siaghah—"a narrow foreland bounded by ledges and steeps on the north and west, falling quickly down to Wady 'Ayun Mousa far below." From this mountain, "2360 feet above the level of the sea," the "magnificent display" is described as including, briefly, the following:

Two-thirds of the Dead Sea . . . the Negeb Moses saw; in a direction a little south of south-west . . . a perspective of scarcely a shorter distance than toward the north; the hill country of Judah; the country around Hebron; up to Bethlehem; with no background but the sky, the spires of Jerusalem stand out plainer than ever; "as far as Bethany"; in the north, hills blend in blueness that lie not far from Nazareth, and look down on the shores of Lake Gennesaret; there is the Jordan; Peræa; Bethabara; the point of Gibeon on the right; the dilapidated tower of Bethel; the high mountains of Ephraim undulate along for a wide distance until they end in Gerizim and Ebal; the hills of Manasseh fall into east-and-west chains which run boldly out toward the valley and present many picturesque features; the mountains before Gilboa have risen still more; beyond these, the hills descend to the lower highlands of Galilee, till they sink off in the plateaus of the northern portion of Dan.

Thus we see that the views obtained by Professor Paine embrace all the territory included in the biblical account, except that the great sea was not visible. Since my journey, the Rev. George E. Post, M. D., of the Syrian medical college connected with the American mission at Beyrout and one of my companions to Mount Sinai, has conducted a scientific expedition to the Moab country. He visited the sites described by Professor Paine, and made drawings of Nebo and Pisgah. He kindly sent me copies, with permission to engrave them for this paper, but they were received too late. His entire report, with engravings, appears in a recent issue of the "Report of the Palestine Exploration Society." It is valuable, and full of thrilling interest. Dr. Post thinks that Nebo is north of Siaghah.

The horseback journey from Jericho to Shechem takes two days. The road is a very rough one, and must have been so when Joshua

made his conquests; for when his spies "went up and viewed Ai . . . they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labor thither; for they are but few" (Joshua vii. 2, 3). Nevertheless the journey is one of the most enjoyable in all Palestine. The start should be made long before sunrise, for it is a rare privilege to see the sun awaken such a drowsy country. When the first glimmer of light comes darting down from the Moabite hills, it trembles a moment among the top leaves of Jordan's verdant side-screens, and then dances hither and thither across the dewy plains of Jericho. The scene is one which would gladden the heart of any husbandman. Towards the south the view is interrupted by a great fog, the rosy high lights of which hover over the Dead Sea. Its left wing hangs drooping over the bosom of the Jordan for a mile or two. The Fountain of Elisha looks almost black at that early hour, and the little stream scarcely seems awake.

Now we turn westward. A short race with the sunbeams across the plain brings us square in front of Mount Quarantana, into whose yawning caves the early light affords the best view of all the day, for then only can the genial rays creep into them. For an hour before sunrise everything looks dismal enough; but when the sun rises, the scene grows more beautiful every foot of the way. When one of the highest points is gained, a vast prospect is presented, that reaches from the great sea on the west, with the hills of Benjamin, overtopped by those of Gilead and Moab (the Jordan between them), on the east. The rolling battlefields of Gibeon lie in full view. Every rod of ground represents a page in Israelitish history. Bound for a special place, however, we must avoid detail and hurry on to Bethel, and east of Bethel to Ai. As the sun journeys on, the air grows hot, and the climb becomes irksome. The Bethel of to-day does not inspire very Jacob-like dreams. The prophecy that "Bethel shall come to naught" has been fully realized. Part of an old pool forms the usual camping-ground of the traveler. The people of the modern village are cleanly and hospitable, and cultivate an abundance of lovely roses, quantities of which they press upon the stranger. The city wall is constructed of immensely tall plants of the prickly pear. They are easier to keep in order than the walls of stone, though stones and "pillars of stone" undoubtedly abound in every field about Bethel. Jerusalem and "the place of Jacob's dream" present the points of interest in the outlook towards the south. The Dead Sea and the Jordan may again be seen south and east; but Ai, our

chief point of interest, "is on the east side of Bethel," not so very far from Abraham's camping-ground. The story of its assault and capture is recorded with such detail as to make it one of the most interesting events in all the Jewish narrative.

It seems as if one of those great wide-spreading oaks which stand to-day on the sides of the hills near Bethel must be the one upon which the King of Ai was hanged, and that any "great heap of stones," so numerous close by, may cover the kingly carcass. There still is the rocky glen where the ambush lay; there the barren ridge where Joshua and his attendants took up their position, north of the city; there the deep valley between them, where he first attracted the attention of Ai; there the wild ravine through which they fled with Ai after them, down towards Jericho. But it is all desolation and ruin now, and the country is not worth the attention of the modern invader.

For good reasons, doubtless, Joshua made Shiloh his headquarters, and "set up the tabernacle of the congregation there." Thus Shiloh became the place of the annual feasts and was a resort well known to all the tribes of Israel.

The neighboring highways are about the roughest over which any one traveling in Palestine ever rode a horse. Indeed, sometimes the traveler is obliged to dismount to help and encourage his poor bewildered horse to follow him. The rougher climbs over, however, the remainder of the journey to Shechem is one of the most varied and enjoyable in all the land. Instead of the small, compressed, ground-down sort of appearance which generally pervades southern Palestine, every prospect seems to please. Thriving olive groves, rich grain-fields, myriads of gaudy flowers, hills covered with growing crops, and the long inclines, terraced now with stone walls, now by the natural formation of the rock, vary the prospect. Such is the outlook presented in all directions, except on the left, towards Mount Gerizim, around the shoulder of which runs the road. Farmers are seen plowing, the women are plucking the tares from the wheat, and the children are helping. Ascending and descending, every foot of the way from Shiloh to Shechem shows the care and attention of an industrious people. Perhaps it is the fresher air that gives them more vigor than have those who inhabit the white chalk-hills and the almost bare valleys of the south country. Even the flowers look fresher, newer, and happier. Every step taken by the horses starts a gossipy wagging of heads and a widening of eyes among the daisies which line the narrow roadway. A glorious surprise comes when the last ascent previous to Gerizim itself is reached. At the

right, spreading eastward for nearly a mile and a half and from north to south for seven miles or more, is a glorious valley, broken up into sections of green and gold and pink, with not a line of fence or wall to disturb it, and only the groves of olives, the trunks of which, twisted and braided together, relieve the uniformity of the expanse. Away over on its eastern side is a line of hills, as dark as a row of olive trees. On the left Gerizim and Ebal stand out majestically against the blue sky, with the wide vale between them, in the midst of which lies Shechem. Then, far in the north-west, rising like a great white screen, as though outstretched for the whole grand evening spectacle to be projected upon it, is snowy Mount Hermon. The whole populace of the town of Hawara, located on the steep incline of Gerizim, comes out to witness the panorama. But all the novelty they see is the stranger; all the music they hear comes from the bells on the necks of the luggage-mules. Soon after this village is passed the road forks. At the right one of the best roads in Palestine leads to Jacob's Well. A shorter cut to the vale of Shechem is made by keeping to the left, but it is by no means so picturesque as the other. For the best view, Shechem should be approached from the south, and just at the close of day. Then the long, wide shadows of Mount Gerizim, projected upon the plain, are welcomed by the husbandman who has been toiling all day under the cloudless sky. The first lowering of the temperature is the signal for the flocks to break away from their flower-besprinkled pasture and to turn themselves towards their folds; the men and the women, often laden with some product of the field, also turn homeward. A great finger seems to have been placed across the lips of Nature, so still and so quiet all becomes with the departure of the sun and the advance of the twilight. It must have been at that same hour when "all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them," congregated, "half of them over against Mount Gerizim, and half of them over against Mount Ebal," while Joshua read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings. And it must have been so silent, too, when a quarter of a century after this a solemn renewal of the covenant took place, and Joshua "set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem."

It is a strange experience to pass through the lovely vale of Shechem and, gazing at Ebal on the right and at Gerizim on the left, to think of how many noted people journeyed likewise long before Christ came. The list of sojourners and travelers includes Abraham, Jacob, Simeon, Levi, Joseph (buried here), Joshua, Abimelech, and Rehoboam. Jesus was

a visitor here, and Shechem was the birthplace of Justin Martyr. The Roman scepter, the Christian cross, and the crescent of Islam have all held sway in Shechem. The garrison whose bugle awakens the echoes of Ebal and Gerizim to-day recalls memories of blessing and cursing, and with American rifles, though under command of Ottoman officers, keeps peace among the turbulent people. Shechem is a cosmopolitan place, and some of her people represent the oldest races. For example, about all the Samaritans that are left congregate there. Within the whitewashed walls of their tiny synagogue is the inscribed "original" of their Pentateuch. This document varies in many particulars from the Pentateuch of the Jews, and is under careful watch. They hold that it was written by Abishua, the son of Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron. The officiating priest is a young man who claims to be a direct descendant of Aaron. After the proper persuasion of backsheesh, he consented to exhibit the antique document and to stand beside it in the synagogue court while its photograph was made. Its great silver case and the rods of the scroll make it very heavy, so that an assistant was required to help the priest carry it. After placing it upon a chair, they very carefully unfolded the embroidered scarf of crimson satin which covered it, and thus displayed the engraved silver case. In time the doors of this were thrown open, and the precious document was made visible. It was rolled like a Jewish scroll upon two metal rods that are much longer than the scroll. These rods protrude at each end for the protection of the parchment. The letters are Samaritan, but they are written in the Hebrew language. The engraved scenes upon the case are said to represent the ground plan of the Tabernacle. In their ceremonies they follow the injunctions of Exodus xxviii. and Leviticus viii. Once a year the Samaritans hold their religious feasts upon the summit of Mount Gerizim, "the mountain of blessing." It is their Moriah. The men, as a rule, are fine looking, pleasant in manners, and superior to the average Syrian. The women are lighter in color than their sisters in Bethlehem and Jerusalem, and seem to be of a very different race. Their hair is black and wavy, and their dress is unlike that of the Mohammedans and Jews. They seem to be happy and are devoted to their creed. Their strange little family numbers less than two hundred.

The location of Shechem is delightful. The whole vale, running east and west, is alive with gushing cascades and bounding streams, fed partly by the twin mountains Ebal, on the north, and Gerizim, on the south. Luxuriant olive groves and fig orchards, interspersed with

fruit trees of various kinds, are dotted hither and thither, everywhere. But the city itself is not so attractive. Many of its streets are cavern-like, for they run under the houses. They would afford an excellent opportunity for the trial of some rapid-transit scheme, were it not that they are so very narrow and continually thronged with the noisy, hurrying multitude. The better view of life is had from the housetops. They are reached from the streets by stone stairways. There the people take their leisure, do a great deal of their trading and much of their work. Thus the houses seem to be, as indeed many are, hoisted a story or two in the air. There is no regularity of style about them, and it is all one's life is worth to try to find the way among them without a guide and a torch. Only from a height can the real beauties of Shechem be seen. Then the broad domes of the mosques and their graceful minarets stand out finely; the variety of houses shows forth and the open streets are indicated, first by the sound which comes up from the multitude, and then by the gay bazars which line them. Fine views are had from "Jacob's Tower," a picturesque structure in the south-west corner of the town. It is said to have been the home of the patriarch whence he sent Joseph to Dothan to look after his recreant brethren. Strangely enough, amidst all the buzz and noise of the town comes the clatter of the cotton-gin, for Shechem is the great cotton center of Palestine. It is also headquarters for the best olive-oil soap. Two miles down the vale is the well of Jacob, where the interview between Christ and the Samaritan woman took place. Directly north, and almost in a line with the well, close to the base of Ebal, is the tomb of Joseph. All along the side of this mountain, when the new cove-

nant was made, Joshua mustered the tribes of Reuben and Gad, of Asher and Zebulon, of Dan and Naphtali. On the other side, against Gerizim, the tribes of Simeon and Levi, of Judah and Issachar, of Joseph and Benjamin were gathered. As one stands looking from the top of Jacob's Tower the present seems to vanish and the past arises again with a strange reality. Not a single feature of nature appears to have been touched out by the wizard pencil of time. Every light and every shade is accentuated by the long perspective of history. The pages recorded here must face those of Sinai. The vale of Shechem is the consonant of the plain of Er Raha. Somewhere and somehow, running through the intervening pages, are the threads we have tried to gather up and follow, guided by the entanglements of tradition and persuaded by the reasonings of the modern explorer. The sounds of idolatry were left at Aaron's Hill, and the blast of the trumpets cheered the desolation of Wady Sheik; then the departing hosts followed across the wilderness, where the manna and the quail were provided, through the inclosure of Hazereth to the wandering-place of Kadesh-Barnea, where the provision of good water was followed by the long tarrying. On they went until, climbing the flinty ridges of the border, the place was reached where denuded nature grew more consistent and the long inclines were found clothed with lovely flowers. There the land, "with milk and honey blest," was seen as the spies had seen it. On and on, by the way of the desert wilds again, to Nebo, to the sacred river, and across it to where all intrusion of barrenness ceased and the Promised Land was reached. Just so we may see it to-day.

Edward L. Wilson.

THE THIRD OF MARCH.



OUR friend Captain Keppell has been with us again, and was as quiet, as agreeable, and as interesting as ever. He had little to say, however, with reference to his recent visit to the East; and indeed we have noticed that

the Captain uniformly forbears to talk about any subject that is not at least ten years old. But one gusty evening, after the lamps were lighted, and the children in bed, and our chairs were drawn in a semicircle round the blazing fire, Keppell filiped the ash off the end of his cigar and remarked, "This is the third of March, is n't it?"

"It sounds like it," replied one of us, as a louder blast of wind howled round the northeast corner of our venerable farm-house.

"Did I ever tell you about Jack Hamilton?" asked Keppell, after a pause. "In the army, you know—got into a scrape—went to New Zealand—and all that."

"I never heard you mention him," said I, settling myself in my chair with agreeable anticipations: for the Captain had his yarn-spinning air on.

"I was reminded of him by the fact that the third of March was his birthday," continued our friend; "and it was a marked day in his calendar for other reasons. I first met him at Oxford: you know I was up at Oxford for a year.